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To cite this article: David Mayers (2016): Destruction Repaired and Destruction Anticipated: United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA), the Atomic Bomb, and US Policy 1944–6, The International History Review, DOI: [10.1080/07075332.2016.1144629](https://doi.org/10.1080/07075332.2016.1144629)

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/07075332.2016.1144629>

 Published online: 25 Feb 2016.

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Destruction Repaired and Destruction Anticipated: United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA), the Atomic Bomb, and US Policy 1944–6

David Mayers

ABSTRACT


This analysis examines the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) and the Acheson-Lilienthal project and brings into conversation their drafting histories, politics, and diplomacy. Placing them in the same analytical framework, something not hitherto done in the literature, this essay traces the saga of UNRRA and Acheson-Lilienthal and their tandem cold-war fates. As peoples and governments pick their way through the humanitarian dilemmas and atomic hazards of the twenty-first century, it is useful to reflect upon the experiences and lessons of these two long-ago initiatives.

KEYWORDS

UNRRA; Acheson-Lilienthal; destruction

The early cold war pitted the United States and USSR in a geopolitical rivalry that fostered the emergence of the bristling national-security state. It remains intact today and will endure into the foreseeable future. Still, this starkness does not constitute the whole tale. Concurrent with the Soviet–US confrontation, Washington in the first years after the Second World War, and in response to that conflagration, sought to reform international society. This ambition stemmed from the idea that the United States and its allies for their collective sake had to improve upon inherited practice, its recent failure evident in war-battered Europe and Asia. Expressions during the war of this outlook were embodied in Franklin Roosevelt's Four Freedoms and the Churchill–FDR issuance of the Atlantic Charter. Scraped of their ebullient democratic language, these collectively urged the establishment of frameworks to reduce the intensity of international violence by adjudicating conflicts. Ridiculed by sceptics, at the time and since, for amounting to empty piety and redolent of hypocrisy, or dismissed as cloaks atop the deep structures of power, both proclamations nevertheless helped sculpt the post-war order.

The organisation, laws, and norms, endorsed by the Allied coalition of the Second World War materialised in the founding of the United Nations, convening of military tribunals at Nuremberg and Tokyo, and ratifications of the Genocide Convention and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. None of these enterprises, though seemingly new in their time, was wholly novel or unprecedented. Individually, and as an interlocking set of standards and institutions, they built upon antecedents. What did set them apart from previous attempts to stabilise global society was that they bore an ineradicable US imprimatur.

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As explored in this essay, another urgency also preoccupied nations in the aftermath of Axis defeat: repair of wartime damage. To countless Europeans and Asians, destruction had been a lived experience. Naturally, they sought in the war's aftermath to revitalise their shattered cities, plundered countryside, and weakened economies. Many Americans were comparably concerned, for reasons ranging from humanitarian sympathy to calculated self-interest. These mixed motives were at play in the part assumed by Americans in the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA), which experimental agency did its major work in 1944–6.

While UNRRA attended to emergency needs, people also brooded about a future in which even greater harms might occur. Astonished by the fate of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, George Orwell predicted in October 1945 that 'likely we all are to be blown to pieces by [the atomic bomb] within the next five years'.¹ Against the prospect of the promiscuous use of such weaponry, Washington officialdom contemplated the potential benefits of internationalising atomic science and technology. The 1946 Acheson-Lilienthal proposal was intended to avert a nuclear-weapons race and place atomic knowledge in UN safe-keeping. After that exercise failed, Americans devised elaborate strategies that if implemented would have produced unprecedented ruin, a dark game soon joined by the Soviets (1949) and Britons (1952).

The following examination of UNRRA and the Acheson-Lilienthal project brings into conversation their drafting histories, politics, and diplomacy. Placing them in the same analytical framework, something not hitherto done in the literature, this essay traces the saga of UNRRA and Acheson-Lilienthal and their tandem cold-war fates. As peoples and governments pick their way through the humanitarian dilemmas and atomic hazards of the twenty-first century, it is useful to reflect upon the experiences and lessons of these two long-ago initiatives, entwined with broader attempts to reorder the world and cross over to safety.

Destruction

The Second World War caused psychic no less than physical injury, the result of that hallucinogenic fury rained - in engineering-mathematical deliberation - upon Europe and Asia. None of the devastation suggested prompt recovery. The total of violence, folly, and cruelty surpassed calculation, reconfirming humanity's moral shortcomings, cumulatively a condition to manage but not a puzzle to resolve.

Precise casualty figures do not exist. Estimates of the number of war dead hover about 60 million, the majority (two-thirds) civilian.² Many more people were left maimed, others depleted by grief. By the end of 1945, refugees, deportees, POWs, slave labourers, and internally displaced or otherwise uprooted people in Asia and Europe numbered in the tens of millions.³ Homelessness, diseases, and hunger gripped regions from the Netherlands to Ukraine to Bengal to China and beyond. Marauding armies, air forces, and blockading navies had meted out punishment to cities, industrial complexes, transportation infrastructure, and agricultural production that dwarfed previous experience. This destruction, combined with great sums spent by the belligerent nations, left economies throughout the war zones in shambles. Whether in rural districts or urban centres - London, Rotterdam, Hamburg, Dresden, Warsaw, Leningrad, Stalingrad, Belgrade, Nanjing, Tokyo,

Yokohama, Hiroshima, Nagasaki, Manila - desolation had swept victors and vanquished, righteous and guilty alike.

Only in time to come will Europeans discover, despite their material rejuvenation, whether they can recover the spiritual dynamism and cultural genius that slipped in 1914, then was expunged, seemingly irrevocably, twenty-five years on. The Polish poet Czesław Miłosz expressed this disconsolateness in his 1985 meditation on the difficulty of writing an analytically scrupulous history of the twentieth century:

I still think too much about the mothers
 And ask what is man born of woman.
 He curls himself up and protects his head
 While he is kicked by heavy boots; on fire and running,
 He burns with bright flame; a bulldozer sweeps him into a clay pit.
 Her child. Embracing a teddy bear. Conceived in ecstasy.
 I haven't learned yet to speak as I should, calmly.⁴

The burden of shame has lain heavy upon Germans, even those born since 1945 or others equally innocent of Third Reich atrocities. To Sabina de Werth Neu (b. 1941 in Berlin), survivor of Anglo-US bombings and rape by Red Army soldiers, the most enduring dilemma was rooted in national identity. Like many of her generation, she felt herself 'a reluctant German'. If not directly, she allowed in 2011, 'we were the children of monsters' by association.⁵

Brutality in Asia, from 1937 Nanjing to 1945 Nagasaki, also encased both perpetrators and blameless in time outside of normal time. Compliance with humanitarian tenets plunged in the maltreating of Allied prisoners by their Japanese captors, massacring of Chinese civilians, ravishing of 'comfort women'.

Formerly a student at a US Christian school for girls, Hata Tomoko of Hiroshima discerned 'an instance of the utmost human insolence' in the atomic killing of non-combatants on 6 August 1945. Of the purported justification, reliant upon utilitarian arithmetic, that untold Japanese and American lives were thereby saved, she protested: 'Nobody except God is allowed to do such a thing, using an uncertain calculation about the future as a basis for committing an irreparable crime in the present.'⁶

That the suffering of innocents transcended geography and rival blocs also struck one-time Auschwitz inmate Primo Levi, when in 1978 he ruminated upon Anne Frank, who died at Bergen-Belsen, and an unknown Japanese girl: they belonged to the same sorrowful sorority. Before them, and the other vast dead, the cold-war wielders of modern weapons might pause.

Nothing is left of ...
 The Dutch girl imprisoned by four walls
 Who wrote of her youth without tomorrows.
 Her silent ash was scattered by the wind,
 Her brief life shut into a crumpled notebook.
 Nothing remains of the Hiroshima schoolgirl,
 A shadow printed on a wall by the light of a thousand suns,
 Victim sacrificed on the altar of fear.
 Powerful of the earth, masters of new poisons,
 Sad secret guardians of final thunder,
 The torments heaven sends us are enough.
 Before your finger presses down, stop and consider.⁷

Yet despite the annihilations or the threat of resumption, restoration was launched in several former war zones. To this cause, UNRRA made early contribution. Under UNRRA's first Director-General, Herbert Lehman, aid reached millions of Asians and Europeans. Simultaneous with this attempt to repair past damage, an effort was also made to avert future cataclysm of potentially larger scale, conveyed in the Acheson-Lilienthal idea of placing atomic science and technology under United Nations aegis. Both UNRRA and the proposed internationalisation of atomic science supposed that a disordered world might yet be righted.

UNRRA

Achievements

Varied initiatives were taken during the Second World War to ease the plight of peoples touched by violence. Hundreds of faith-based and secular groups were financed and staffed in Allied countries, most prominently in Great Britain, Canada, and the United States. Unitarians, Quakers, Jews, Catholics, and mainline Protestants, occasionally joined to ethnic fraternal organisations, numbered in the rescue formations. These and other non-governmental philanthropies struggled to supply sufferers with food, clothing, medicines, and other balm.⁸ This last included, as provided by the New York-based Emergency Rescue Committee, safe haven for intellectuals and artists sought by Nazi pursuers.

The US government, at the behest of Treasury secretary Henry Morgenthau, established the War Refugee Board (WRB) in January 1944. Albeit little and late compared to the urgency, the WRB did manage to save 200,000 imperilled Jews and an additional 20,000 persons. The State Department had earlier created the Office of Foreign Relief and Rehabilitation Operations (OFRRO). Its commissioning in November 1942 particularly gratified former President Herbert Hoover. He had lobbied since the outset of European hostilities for a programme, modelled on his First World War relief work conducted in Belgium behind German lines, to assist war-trapped civilians, irrespective of where they resided or under which regime they lived.⁹ As actually mandated, OFRRO, in co-ordination with other Allied agencies, was to deliver necessities of life to victims of Axis power provided that they dwelt in territories liberated from Third Reich conquest.¹⁰ This proviso, contra Hoover, stemmed from the British government's concern - voiced in August 1940 by Prime Minister Churchill - that assistance intended for people in Axis-subjugated countries would inevitably land in enemy hands, thus inadvertently supplementing German power.¹¹

A modest undertaking, crewed by 150 staffers, OFRRO provided help to refugees (Poles, Greeks, Yugoslavs, Jews) and others in need in French North Africa, Egypt, Palestine, Spain, and Kenya. Picked by FDR to head OFRRO, Lehman later recalled its doings with pride; he regarded his ten-month-long tenure, punctuated by bruising moments in Washington's interagency warfare, as useful rehearsal for his subsequent UNRRA career.¹²

The UNRRA enterprise, headquartered in Washington, constituted a unique multinational aid effort, advanced by forty-four Allied countries. Through combined action and pooling of resources, these 'United Nations' (moniker coined by FDR to designate the anti-Axis coalition) meant to enlarge upon OFRRO while also enlisting many of its top administrators. As originally conceptualised in January–June 1943 by Dean Acheson, then

Assistant Secretary of State for Economic Affairs, and resident Washington ambassadors - Lord Halifax (UK), Maxim Litvinov (USSR), Wei Tao-ming (China) - UNRRA proposed to help people whose countries had been overrun by Axis armies and could not yet procure adequate amounts of foodstuffs, medicines, or other essentials on the world market.¹³ (As later amended, Axis lands were designated eligible for UNRRA aid, albeit restricted to supporting refugees and displaced people and providing nourishment to children and mothers.¹⁴) Upon signing of the UNRRA agreement in White House ceremony, 9 November 1943, President Roosevelt delivered this mission statement:

The sufferings of the little men and women who have been ground under the Axis heel can be relieved only if we utilize the production of ALL the world to balance the want of ALL the world. In UNRRA we have devised a mechanism, based on the processes of true democracy, which can go far toward accomplishment of such an objective in the days and months of desperate emergency which will follow the overthrow of the Axis.¹⁵

As stipulated by Acheson and company, UNRRA operations would be supported by those member-states that had been spared Axis invasion, each doing so to the value of 1% of its annual national income.¹⁶ This formula in actual practice was not realised, however; the theoretically eligible nations did not contribute at the designated levels. Nor was the burden of supporting UNRRA budgets evenly shouldered, their final total amounting to US\$4 billion (equivalent to roughly US\$52 billion in 2015). The United States, at the time in possession of more than half the world's production, and largest bankroller of the Allied war, accounted for roughly 73% of UNRRA funding. The remaining percentage came from the United Kingdom (16%), next Canada, with Brazil, South Africa, India, Australia, and New Zealand accounting for most of the rest.¹⁷ In the event, by Lehman's estimate, 25 million tons of UNRRA supplies were distributed to stricken peoples.¹⁸

Americans should not begrudge any financial lop-sidedness supporters such as Lehman and Vice President Henry Wallace said. They argued that the US economy in coming years would require revived overseas markets, sustained by confident societies capable of absorbing US investment capital and goods produced in US factories and farms. In other words, humane feeling and business concerns intertwined, ample justification for Washington's prominence in UNRRA. Clout in that organisation should reinforce Washington's global leadership while fostering conditions conducive to long-term US advantage.¹⁹ 'It was to their own [American] interest to rehabilitate these ravaged countries,' Lehman once pronounced.²⁰ General Dwight Eisenhower, one of the few military leaders to support UNRRA's European operations enthusiastically, made this case for enlightened self-interest. 'We [Americans],' he told Congress's fiscal watchdogs in November 1945, 'must make our proportionate contribution to relief of the distress in Europe if our military victory is to have permanent significance'.²¹

Regarding governance, UNRRA guidelines mandated a policy-making council, composed of delegates from each member-state. The primary authority, though, resided in an executive committee - consisting of US, British, Soviet, Chinese representatives - that would in light of unfolding contingencies set priorities, allocate resources, and monitor the efficacy of specific programmes. It was this executive committee that nominated Lehman to serve as General-Director, that choice dutifully ratified by the wider council at its first session (10 November–1 December 1943 in Atlantic City, New Jersey). As needs required, the executive committee was pledged to consult other UNRRA members, a sop

Table 1. Recipients of UNRRA commodity aid (in thousands of US dollars)

Country	Aid received
Albania	26,250.9
Austria	135,513.2
Byelorussian SSR	60,820.0
China	517,846.7
Czechoslovakia	261,337.4
Dodecanese Islands	3,900.4
Ethiopia	884.9
Finland	2,441.2
Greece	347,162.0
Hungary	4,386.5
Italy	418,222.1
Korea	943.9
Philippines	9,880.2
Poland	477,927.0
San Marino	30.0
Ukrainian SSR	188,199.3
Yugoslavia	415,642.0

Source: G. Woodbridge, *UNRRA: The History of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration* (New York, 1950), iii. 428.

not reassuring to lesser nations, particularly not the Canadians who at one point toyed with the idea of severing their UNRRA tie; they chafed at taking instruction from a cabal of big powers, allegedly devoid of finer democratic sensibility and presumptuous in their distributing of Canadian products (wheat, for example) to distant peoples not necessarily aligned with Ottawa's economic-diplomatic interests. A number of middling bodies was meanwhile created, among which were committees to advise on the purchase of supplies (often from military surplus) and implement relief programmes at a pace commensurate with the retreat of Axis power from captive territories. Even more specialised committees were formed to deal with logistical dilemmas, provisioning priorities, and disbursements of health care, farm tools, food stocks, clothing, fuel, and transport.²²

Apart from the co-ordinating of personnel belonging to assorted private relief agencies, UNRRA's own operations employed thousands of men and women, recognisable on assignment by distinctive grey/khaki uniforms and red shoulder patches with white lettering: *UNRRA*. The UNRRAIDs - whose roster peaked at 20,000 - were posted in relief missions stretching from Western Europe to Soviet territories, to the Balkans to Africa, to China and the Philippines.²³ Better than 40% of UNRRA employees in 1946 were female, many enrolled on the social-work side and heavily recruited from the United States (often imbued with New Deal idealism), Canada, Great Britain, and Western Europe.²⁴ Doctors and nurses, of whom there were always shortages, hygiene experts, crops/animal husbandry specialists, engineers, accountants, and administrative support were also deployed. The top slot in UNRRA, designated a US preserve, was filled lengthily by staid Lehman - Democratic governor of New York (1933-42), New Deal stalwart, civil-rights proponent. Immediately following Lehman's 31 March 1946 resignation, the colourful and voluble mayor of New York City, Fiorello La Guardia, assumed the directorship. He held the post through the end of 1946, whereupon Major General Lowell Ward Rooks of the US Army accepted the job, his duty being to oversee the orderly closure of UNRRA transactions, mostly phased out in 1947.

The position of Senior Deputy Director General originally fell to Britain's Sir Arthur Salter (an Oxford scholar), at the time over-worn, albeit dedicated to the UNRRA cause. An Australian Navy man, Commander R.G.A. Jackson ('Jacko'), whose liveliness of mind, physical stamina, and knack for disentangling bureaucratic knots, succeeded Salter.²⁵ Canadian, Chinese, Czech, Dutch, Polish, South African, and Soviet figures also held key posts. Canada's Mary Craig McGeachy, a veteran diplomat, became the senior-ranking woman in UNRRA and the only one appointed to executive level; she headed, if not brilliantly, the sprawling welfare division.²⁶

Despite admitting to a myriad glitches along the way, UNRRAIDs by their self-assessment achieved much in a brief time: they helped to control epidemics, check famines, enhance rates of agricultural/industrial production, and instilled enough confidence in dazed peoples that they could exercise responsibility for their own wellbeing. Proponents claimed that their UNRRA had created a 'blueprint' for post-war international society.²⁷ George Woodbridge, a US member of UNRRA's European Regional Office (London) and official chronicler of UNRRA, offered this paean in 1950: '[UNRRA] amply justified its existence ... The work performed through UNRRA was a demonstration on the largest scale which the world has yet seen that nations can unite to fulfill the exhortation voiced long ago by the prophet Ezra, "Do right to the widow, judge for the fatherless, give to the poor, defend the orphan, clothe the naked, heal the broken and weak."²⁸ To support this viewpoint, Woodbridge and colleagues could, indeed did, cite cases, including the following sample.

The largest UNRRA assistance went to impoverished China, where these achievements were salient. Damaged dykes and levies were repaired - with new ones erected - along rivers to staunch seasonal floods, thereby reclaiming lands lost for tillage since the 1937 Japanese invasion. Several million people were fed and saved from death by starvation, even while famine stalked the country.²⁹ Other people were gainfully employed in UNRRA-sponsored works, such as paving highways, restoring railway roadbeds, and modernising sanitation facilities. Medical clinics were established. Clothing, shelter, and medicines were distributed on a scale hitherto unknown in republican China. Education programmes were inaugurated to train local youths to fill future cadres of technicians in public health, pharmaceuticals, food production, transportation, and communications. Power plants, waterworks, coal mining, fisheries, port facilities, and textile manufacturing were repaired, updated, and turned from dilapidation and idleness to usefulness. All this was done as civil war convulsed the country, Mao's rebels versus the fading Guomindang government.³⁰ In understatement, Woodbridge allowed in 1950: 'How much more extensive and enduring the [UNRRA programme] might have been, but for the continuing dislocation and destruction resulting from civil war, must be left to conjecture.'³¹ Still, Lehman believed, from a US standpoint all was not forfeited, not even in the radically new circumstance of a communist People's Republic: 'The Chinese people know of our record of enlightened fairness and friendship. They have not forgotten UNRRA.'³²

Even less open to doubt was the Filipino case. The UNRRA investment in the Philippines, though small compared to that in China, helped repair war-trampled Manila, lifted agricultural production, and resurrected fisheries. Thousands of Filipino families obtained shelter and nutrition. Carlos Romulo, first Foreign Minister of the independent Philippines, testified in 1958 that UNRRA had enabled his countrymen 'to start living again'.³³ Evidence suggests that Korea too made headway in relief and rehabilitation, despite the deepening

north–south divide. In the event, the northern zone was recipient of medical supplies, locomotives, and trucks, whereas clothing items and raw materials were concentrated in the south. The benefits of such relief operations and goods concentrated on Korea were, alas, not destined to survive the bloodletting of 1950–3.³⁴

Of European states, Poland received the largest slice of emergency aid. More than 16% of the nation's pre-war population had perished. Upon first viewing Warsaw, Ira Hirschmann, while on UNRRA reconnaissance, remarked the city's 'all-embracing' wreckage.³⁵ Infusions of food, medical personnel, rolling stock (primarily trucks), and insecticides (DDT) enabled the Polish government to avoid massive starvation and check typhus and typhoid epidemics. The UNRRA 'spark plug' also ignited, as a future basis for modern industry, electrical power generation, coal mining, and a semblance of self-sustaining mechanised agricultural economy.³⁶

Ruin in the western republics of the USSR (Ukraine, Byelorussia) overwhelmed anything that UNRRA could deliver. Indeed, the extent of desolation and casualties - upward of 25 million dead - inflicted by the German invasion surpassed anything in the annals of modern warfare. Pursuant to the Nazi idea, iterated in Berlin's 1941 Hunger Plan, demography in parts of the western Soviet Union had been fundamentally altered via executions, orchestrated starvation, and forced emigration. This elimination policy also aimed to raze cities, eradicate industries, demolish monuments of civilisation, and foster a version of primitive agriculture adequate to meet the food requirements of Germans, but not those of anyone else.³⁷ Consequently, as with other scorched areas of the USSR, the restoration of Ukraine and Byelorussia proved an epic undertaking. It consumed Soviet resources and assets into the deep post-war future. Still, UNRRA's supply of food, clothing, hospital equipment, and machinery constituted a useful grant - this at a moment when the remainder of the USSR was little able to assist.³⁸

In Czechoslovakia, 'Auntie UNRRA' dispensed goods and services sufficient to help reactivate the country's economy and transportation network. Czechoslovakia, in fact, became the first receiving nation to make contribution to other needy ones via donations of fruits, vegetables, and sugar.³⁹ No other UNRRA-assisted country by mid-1947 was in better physical shape than Czechoslovakia, testament to the hardihood of the people themselves but also evidence of UNRRA's impact on collective morale.⁴⁰ Neighbouring Austria, by Allied fiat in 1943 accorded the status of Hitler's 'first victim', received necessary supplies of food (meats, grains, fats, oils) along with fertilisers, seeds, and farming equipment. Malnourishment did not overtake the cities or the countryside, the basis for the 1948 judgement of Britain's Brigadier Reginald Parminter, who had supervised UNRRA programmes from his Vienna office: 'There is no possible shadow of doubt that the Austrian nation owes its survival to UNRRA aid.'⁴¹

In the Balkans, wartime desolations were compounded by civil upheavals, as in Greece (ELAS versus royalists), and ethnic vengeance, as in Yugoslavia (Croats versus Serbs). Nevertheless, despite unceasing violence, UNRRA mounted ambitious ameliorative campaigns. These stalled famine, contained malaria and tuberculosis, dispensed penicillin, staffed hospitals, distributed garments, and imported locomotives, trucks, tractors, and draft animals. In the absence of UNRRA in Greece and Yugoslavia conditions of penury in those countries would have lingered for even longer decades than occurred.⁴²

Shipments of UNRRA medical and food aid to mangled Italy, dubbed an Ally after defecting from the Axis in September 1943, were likewise delivered on an impressive level

and ran through the end of June 1947. Cautious hope supplanted pervading gloom as a million mothers, pregnant women, and children were quickly rescued from disaster. Other categories of people were soon afterwards helped. Industrial tools, fuel, vaccination dispensaries, and agricultural machines were additionally sent.⁴³ Lehman later claimed that UNRRA was responsible for preventing Italy (Greece too, by his reckoning) from Communist takeover.⁴⁴

Not only did UNRRA workers assist people as they struggled to overcome economic-social paralysis. But the UNRRA also, with the International Red Cross and Allied military authorities, assumed responsibility for the repatriation of uprooted men, women, and children: displaced persons (DPs). In Europe and North Africa, DPs were congregated in improvised centres (schools, prisons, disused military encampments), mainly located in territories of the former Third Reich or Italy. Nationals of every country hit by Nazi armies, the surviving remnant of European Jewry, slave labourers, military prisoners, and orphans populated 900 DP camps in 1945–7.⁴⁵ Their organisation and administration were monumental tasks. So was the care needed to deal with people possessed of a bewildering diversity of need - shelter, food, education, medical attention, counselling, cultural uplift, political re-engagement - while properly processing their homeward return. In Germany alone, according to one estimate, UNRRA tended to the care and repatriation of 6.5 million displaced persons.⁴⁶ This effort also subsumed attempts via the Child Search programme to return to anxious parents their kidnapped youngsters who had disappeared into the maw of Hitler's *Lebensborn* programme; for their Aryan qualities (blond, blue eyes), as many as 350,000 had been snatched in Nazi-occupied areas (Baltic republics, Czechoslovakia, France, Poland, Ukraine) and taken to Germany for assimilation into the *Herrenvolk*.⁴⁷

Not all people who were eligible wanted to return to the country of their origin. The reluctant included hundreds of thousands of Poles uneasy about living under Communist rule and those Soviet soldiers who had collaborated with Hitler's war effort, such as General Andrei Vlasov's Russian Liberation Army or the Ukrainian Galician Division. Also resisting were guiltless Red Army men who nonetheless came under Moscow's suspicion of disloyalty by virtue of having been captured by Germans or their allies. In the event, unwilling Red Army personnel (perhaps two million) were obliged by Western governments in 1945–7 to return to the USSR, which UNRRA acquiesced and often abetted.⁴⁸ Many Jews meanwhile longed to move to Palestine, not resettle in their native lands, where returnees were often greeted gloweringly or - as in parts of Poland - with outright malice and violent outbursts (Kielce, July 1946). Like most relief associations at the time, UNRRA did not distinguish the singularity of the Shoah from the general horror. Luckily, from the standpoint of their charges, Jewish philanthropic agencies - not UNRRA - were allowed from September 1945 onward to exercise responsibility for the welfare of Jews while facilitating the relocation of individuals according to their preference.⁴⁹

Criticisms

Few recipients of UNRRA aid stinted their appreciations. In January 1948 Britain's Foreign Secretary, Ernest Bevin, voiced a view shared by many people: 'What sort of Europe we should have had without UNRRA, I really do not know.' He thought it 'too horrible to contemplate'.⁵⁰ Yet the reputation of UNRRA was hardly unblemished or free of sceptics who thought the programme oversold, and actually pernicious.⁵¹

People of best calibre or competence, as Lehman occasionally fretted, did not occupy all top UNRRA echelons: 'We had some bad actors.'⁵² He himself lacked executive drive. He was devoid of charisma. He possessed too passive a personality to navigate adroitly among Washington hazards: partisan skirmishers, bureaucracy barons, preening egos. 'Not a very good fighter,' was Henry Wallace's apt verdict.⁵³ As for the field personnel, they were in instances hastily recruited (from more than forty countries), without much orientation thrust into novel and trying situations, and expected to follow orders that were not always clearly stated or understood; faulty transmission or garbled translation frayed nerves and caused mischief.⁵⁴ Exacerbating these problems, UNRRAIDs were expected to exercise considerable independent initiative. But if trends ran wrong, higher authority could repudiate the local UNRRA team, leaving it isolated and demoralised.

Allied army officers, among whom the celebrated Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery, often looked askance at UNRRA. They thought it an ill-disciplined enterprise that hindered combat operations, got in the way of occupation governments, employed busy-bodies and do-gooders, cluttered logistics schedules, commandeered ships and planes otherwise available for support service, taxed limited food and medical supplies, and anyway was inferior to the time-tested Red Cross.⁵⁵ Even some military officers seconded to UNRRA shared this dismissive attitude, holding assignment to UNRRA a 'degradation' and openly disparaged its works.⁵⁶ Case in point was Britain's Lieutenant General Frederick Morgan, previously a planner of the 1944 D-Day operation. This amiable but distorted personality, who led (October 1945–August 1946) the displaced-persons programme in Germany, made himself unpopular in UNRRA by not taking more seriously than he did or treat in better tone and decency the enervated Jewish DPs in his care. After visiting (summer 1946) the Wolfratshausen DP camp in southern Bavaria, Morgan recorded in his diary that the denizens were employed in 'nefarious businesses' and lived contentedly in squalor: 'These people being Jews all one can notice is every evidence of a year's dilapidation and accumulation of filth.'⁵⁷ A self-proclaimed expert on the 'Oriental' Hebrew mind, Morgan recoiled from what he described as Semitic vengefulness, Shylock slyness, hysterical rab-bis, exaggerated camp grievances, and scheming Jewish staffers in UNRRA ('not one of whom do I trust').⁵⁸ But he was not fired (by La Guardia) until after he publicly charged that UNRRA was feeble in every respect but one: protecting Soviet spies and giving cover to sundry criminals involved in narcotics peddling and human-smuggling schemes of Zionist-Moscow design.⁵⁹ Of his successor at UNRRA, Myer Cohen, Morgan scorned the man as Jew and incompetent. What a pity, Morgan reflected a few months after his dismissal from UNRRA, that Jewish restiveness in DP camps intertwined mischievously with British attempts to counter Zionists and Jewish immigration to mandate Palestine. 'Our bureaucrats just haven't got the guts,' he observed to a friend, 'to shoot or gas these people as our late enemies had.'⁶⁰

Other people, more responsible ones than the egregious Morgan, did wonder at the inability of Lehman, later La Guardia, to suppress or contain the malfeasance that swirled about UNRRA's fringes. Black-market racketeers, prostitution-ring pimps, and wily officials were among the predators who fed upon UNRRA bounty or swindled its intended beneficiaries. Nor was UNRRA assumed in every capital to be politically chaste or above intrigue. Soviet officials wondered about the doings of British and American aid workers in Ukraine and Byelorussia, even as Moscow sought to insert its own - not exactly intelligence agents - into senior UNRRA management. Mikhail Menshikov, who exercised duties in the

Washington office (Deputy Director General, Bureau of Areas) and outwardly assumed a nonpartisan role, warranted Lehman's posting a sharp outlook.⁶¹ Albania's Communist leader, Enver Hoxha, accused UNRRA of waging sabotage campaigns in his country. In actuality, Lehman blocked OSS agents from involvement with UNRRA, thinking, quite rightly, that their detection would abrade UNRRA's credibility.⁶²

The severest critics of UNRRA resided in the United States. They combined fiscal conservatism with scepticism about the purported merit of post-war involvement overseas, a viewpoint exemplified by Senator Robert Taft (R—Ohio). Having given full campaign throttle to anxieties about government waste, from New Deal innovations onward, the GOP won the November 1946 congressional elections, gaining control of both Senate and House chambers. This political reality ensured that future UNRRA funding - not easy to secure even in the organisation's halcyon days - would be hard, if not impossible, to obtain in the new regime of austerity and retrenchment.⁶³ Meanwhile, the GOP's grand old man, Herbert Hoover, intensified his critique of UNRRA. His failed presidency notwithstanding, he enjoyed a reputation for expertise on international aid and approval for his earlier deeds, famously his direction of the American Relief Administration in post-First World War Europe. Stung at not having been asked to head UNRRA, resentful of Lehman, persuaded that receiving countries should pay for UNRRA contributions, Hoover since UNRRA's inception had circulated blistering criticisms in Washington.⁶⁴ After FDR's death in April 1945, Hoover took advantage of his friendship with Harry Truman to drip calumny into the President's ear about UNRRA, strengthening his own reservations about it. To Lehman's dismay, in March 1946 Truman asked Hoover to evaluate the food needs of Europeans and Asians.⁶⁵ Lehman resigned in consequence, a move made easier by his designs on a 1946 Senate run, which flopped. Thereupon the flamboyant but ailing La Guardia took command.⁶⁶ (He died in September 1947, his demise accelerated by his UNRRA exertions.)

Enthusiasm for UNRRA also withered in the State Department. Secretary James Byrnes (July 1945—January 1947) came to object to a governing council composed of diverse regimes, including Communist, which presumed to decide on the size and allocation of aid levied upon the United States.⁶⁷ Matters here were aggravated when, in August 1946, a US transport plane was downed over Marxist Yugoslavia. In Byrnes's account, the captive crew, whose number included an UNRRA man, saw through the gate of their Yugoslav prison 'an American-made locomotive over at the railway depot with the letters UNRRA printed on it. They knew that 70 percent of the cost of that locomotive was furnished by the U.S. taxpayer and the thought contributed little to the comfort of their internment.'⁶⁸ Indeed, 'a pretty poor return', Hoover acridly chimed, for that aid heedlessly funnelled to Tito's Yugoslavia.⁶⁹

Will Clayton, a principal architect of the State Department's European Recovery Program (ERP or Marshall Plan), likewise condemned UNRRA. He rued Washington's forfeiture of exclusive decision-making authority while Americans bore the main financial burden. He felt that vigorous unilateral policies instead would produce political-economic dividends for the United States, far exceeding anything to arise from mushy-minded multilateralism. Of the prospective Marshall Plan, he said in 1947, as the cold-war chrysalis was bursting open: 'We must avoid getting into another UNRRA. *The United States must run this [ERP] show.*'⁷⁰

Well after UNRRA sputtered to its end, Acheson, once the organisation's champion, penned this judgement, a reflection of State Department interpretation and prevailing Washington sentiment: 'Internationally administered relief had been a failure. The staff obtainable had been weak and the leadership weaker. UNRAA supplies turned up all too frequently in black markets, but, far more serious, the bulk of them, from our point of view, went to the wrong places and were used for wrong purposes.' In vexation, he observed, 'relief, largely supplied or paid for by the United States, [had gone] to Eastern Europe and was used by governments bitterly hostile to us.'⁷¹ Still, he took solace in this notion: where UNRRA had erred, the Marshall Plan in 1948–51 went right; only deserving European states deemed worthy of US assistance had benefited, to the tune of US\$12.3 billion. Neither that glory nor the diplomatic profit that accrued to Washington was dissipated or shared with others.⁷²

Atomic bomb

While UNRRA performed its chores, the Americans at Bikini Atoll in the Marshall Islands detonated two 21-kiloton atomic bombs, 1 and 24 July 1946.⁷³ Already sobered by US acquisition of atomic weaponry and demonstrated willingness to use it, Joseph Stalin had earlier ordered Soviet scientists to hasten their research.⁷⁴ The resultant effort, abetted by clandestine intelligence agents, yielded a Soviet atomic bomb in August 1949, before most US scientists and the CIA thought probable. Truman in January 1950, as a consequence of this Soviet breakthrough, authorised development of a radically more fearsome thing, the hydrogen bomb, which addition to the US arsenal was made in 1952. In turn, Soviet scientists, whose corps included Andrei Sakharov, tested their first thermonuclear bomb in August 1953, done, in his telling, 'to make the country strong enough to ensure peace'.⁷⁵ As for Great Britain, it ascended to the atomic club with the testing of a fission bomb in 1952 and a hydrogen one in 1957. Thus the three pre-eminent powers joined the nuclear-arms race, unaware and unembarrassed by Hata Tomoko's protest against 'human insolence'.

Yet attempts were made in 1945–6, of which Hata would have approved had she known of them, to defer or halt the spread of these weapons. Before the test explosion (16 July 1945) in the New Mexico desert, a group of Manhattan Project scientists had tried to block the atomic assault on Japan. Based at the University of Chicago - clustered around physicists James Franck and Leo Szilard - these petitioning scientists, whom there were more than sixty, favoured international control of the atom.⁷⁶ Their worry was, in Franck's words, that 'mankind has learned to unleash atomic power without being ethically and politically prepared to use it wisely'.⁷⁷ To speed the war's end, Franck and colleagues argued to Secretary of War Henry Stimson in June 1945 on behalf of a demonstration explosion of an atomic device, presumably on a remote Pacific island. According to this reasoning, Tokyo's civilian and military officials would be so shaken by the spectacle that they would sue to surrender. An arms race would be pre-empted, the conditions for far-reaching agreements on atomic weaponry advanced. This Franck line, alas, made no headway among other Manhattan Project scientists - J. Robert Oppenheimer who directed the Los Alamos laboratories, Enrico Fermi, Ernest Lawrence - or with Stimson. None of them perceived a feasible alternative to combat use. Truman probably did not read the Chicago recommendations and was otherwise uninhibited regarding Hiroshima and Nagasaki.⁷⁸

Notions of checking atomic weaponry did not disappear, however. They rode upon cresting anxiety, which feeling Stimson shared. Though he never disavowed the ostensible wisdom of launching the Hiroshima-Nagasaki strikes, indeed defended them in print and speech, he had been eager in late summer 1945 to find an exit from the nascent atomic dilemma. To this end, and despite his dislike of Stalinism, he urged Truman to reach an understanding with the Kremlin. 'In effect,' Stimson wrote in a memorandum, 'to enter an arrangement with the Russians, the general purpose of which would be to control and limit the use of the atomic bomb as an instrument of war and so far as possible to direct and encourage the development of atomic power for peaceful and humanitarian purposes'.⁷⁹ Bold co-operation could avert an arms race, Stimson stated in the September days just before he retired from government service: 'Our objective must be to get the best kind of international bargain we can - one that has some chance of being kept and saving civilization not for five or for twenty years, but forever.'⁸⁰ In the event, no such initiative won endorsement by Truman or his Cabinet officers, who, excepting Henry Wallace (then of the Commerce Department), viewed the USSR with mounting impatience.

Clear-eyed about Stalin, and mindful of problems that had thwarted arms control since time immemorial, backers of atomic control nevertheless dared to hope. Solution might reside in a version of custodianship. To this end, Acheson, by then State Department Under-Secretary, concentrated his attention from January 1946 to midyear. Previously he had supported Stimson's idea of negotiating directly with Kremlin authorities.⁸¹ Thereafter, Acheson, not yet a confirmed Cold Warrior - in early 1946 he still favoured more UNRRA aid to Soviet territories and thought a generous loan to Moscow doable - laboured for atomic co-operation within a United Nations framework.⁸² The occasion for his work rested in a resolution, 24 January 1946, of the UN General Assembly to establish the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC). It was charged with making recommendations on the sharing of scientific knowledge, eradicating atomic weaponry, and fashioning safeguards to protect complying states from violators and evaders.

To advise the government on this bundle of complications, Byrnes chose Acheson to head a committee to sketch a US position. Other members were Vannevar Bush (senior science advisor, head of the Carnegie Institution), James Conant (President of Harvard University), Major General Leslie Groves (Manhattan Project director), and John McCloy (former Assistant Secretary of War). To aid this committee, Acheson organised a body of consultants led by David Lilienthal, the strong-willed chair of the Tennessee Valley Authority; other consultants were Chester Barnard (President of New Jersey Bell Telephone), Charles Thomas (Vice-President and Technical Director of Monsanto Chemical Company), Harry Winne (Vice-President in charge of engineering policy for General Electric Company). The most prominent of Acheson's consultants was Oppenheimer, a man unsettled by his role in the incinerations of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.⁸³ He confessed to Truman, himself possessed of more remorse than he publicly admitted: 'Mr. President, I have blood on my hands.'⁸⁴

In early March 1946, the consultants submitted their ideas and findings - *A Report on the International Control of Atomic Energy* - to Acheson and his committee. They, in turn, despite quibbles and qualms (Groves especially), endorsed the recommendations. Remembered since as the Acheson-Lilienthal Report, it was mainly the product of Oppenheimer's pertinacity.⁸⁵ His sensibility suffused the document: 'We are not dealing simply

with a military or scientific problem but with a problem in statecraft and the ways of the human spirit.⁸⁶

The report distinguished between safe operations and 'intrinsically dangerous' ones. The former were to be left to the control of individual sovereign governments, the latter to reside in an agency of unique prestige, prospectively named the Atomic Development Authority (ADA) and to be housed in the UN's Security Council. Presumptively safe activities pointed to peaceful uses of atomic science, for example, the generation of electrical energy for domestic heating and light or the use of radioactive tracers in medical studies. Designated dangerous activities hinged on the making of atomic bombs, the collecting of raw materials, and the producing of plutonium and uranium-235.⁸⁷ Only the ADA could conduct dangerous operations. It alone would enjoy access to the planet's uranium and thorium caches; it would build, own, and run reactors and separation plants; its expert personnel would license and inspect activities in every country that undertook nuclear work. In effect, the United States would divest its atomic monopoly, expected anyway to be temporary, and place trust in an international institution and mechanisms of joint control. Thus the atomic arms race should be foreclosed before it gained unstoppable momentum.⁸⁸

Additional benefits from the programme were predicted to be equally profound, perhaps leading to a version of perpetual peace. The new scheme, if properly executed, could 'establish patterns of cooperation among nations, the extension of which may even contribute to the solution of the problem of war itself'. To that optimism, and its intimations of establishing a world federation, the authors added this flourish: 'When the plan is in full operation there will no longer be secrets about atomic energy. We believe that this is the firmest basis of security; for in the long term there can be no international control and no international cooperation which does not presuppose an international community of knowledge.'⁸⁹

Henry Wallace welcomed the Acheson-Lilienthal idea. To him and like-minded progressives, it was a palpable shift away from the realm of power politics or showdown with Moscow. He declared that FDR would have applauded - who, in fact, by the time of the 1945 Yalta conference entertained the idea of sharing atomic science with the USSR.⁹⁰

To legions of sceptics, neither the ghost of FDR nor the preachment of Wallace was reassuring: the premises and practicality of the Acheson-Lilienthal plan - which eschewed inspection of Soviet security sites - indicated superficial reasoning, thus risking the surrender of tangible advantages for the sake of a nebulous future based on degrees of co-operation never before attained. Besides, the doubters said, the United Nations was a fledgling affair. Established only in June 1945, scattered in makeshift quarters around New York City, it was an unproven institution, hardly substantial enough to ensure US security or host the contemplated ADA. The Soviets, in any event, were making trouble - not vacating northern Iran, playing crude in those European countries occupied by the Red Army, sponsoring atomic spies in Canada - and seemed less-than-reliable long-term partners. Kremlin men were not, in short, the sort of people with whom to impart scientific findings of potential military application. Stalin's tough radio address (9 February) added further to this outlook, reinforced by tutorials from George Kennan ('long telegram', 22 February) and Churchill ('iron curtain' speech, 5 March). If executed, the Acheson-Lilienthal proposal would give away too much, too soon - a patently premature move, one Bernard Baruch warned, constituting a colossal compromise of US safety.⁹¹

Byrnes asked Baruch to present Washington's atomic energy case to the AEC, a request that reflected White House ambivalence on the merit of reposing confidence in UN agencies or trust in Stalin.⁹² Wealthy, vain, and obdurate, Baruch was a self-styled counsellor to presidents, from Woodrow Wilson onward. Still feisty, despite the passing years (b. 1870), the prospect of a UN appearance flattered his *amour propre*. Before that event, 14 June 1946, he and his aides - business associates of conservative bent, plus a recruited scientist, Richard Tolman of the California Institute of Technology - modified the Acheson-Lilienthal proposal.⁹³ They shrouded it in sterner spirit, much to the chagrin of Oppenheimer, Wallace, et al.⁹⁴ The concept of Atomic Development Authority was retained, but states that violated the agreement on atomic controls would be promptly punished, in ways not clarified but severely.⁹⁵ Moreover, in a swipe against Moscow, no veto-wielding member of the UN Security Council could skirt the prohibitions on making atomic weapons: 'There must be no veto to protect those who violate ... agreements not to develop or use atomic energy for destructive purposes.'⁹⁶ Baruch told AEC delegates that the United States would naturally cease building atomic weapons once all conditions were met.

The Soviet representative to the AEC, Andrei Gromyko, responded on 19 June to Baruch with a counterproposal. This took as imperative a comprehensive ban on atomic bombs: they should not be produced, not stockpiled, not used. All existing atomic weapons must be dismantled once a convention was agreed upon; signatory states would punish any delinquent regime - for which potential designation only the United States, with its nine bombs in 1946, could possibly qualify - that refused to abolish its atomic arsenal.⁹⁷ In the ensuing months, an intense discussion developed, one not eased by modest adjustments adduced by each side. Choleric feeling expressed within AEC conclave inevitably spilled over into the General Assembly, where the implacable Vyacheslav Molotov defended Moscow's position.

The entire exercise to internationalise atomic science fizzled by year's end. The AEC did approve (ten votes for, with Poland and the USSR abstaining) a draft of the Baruch plan. But it lacked hope of realisation in the face of Soviet objection armoured with Security Council veto. An unresolvable problem held: Kremlin comrades distrusted the United States and were determined to achieve atomic equivalence, lest the USSR be permanently relegated to second-class status and strategic vulnerability. Indeed, Soviet atomic researches were never constrained by any version of pending international control, not even the more forgiving Acheson-Lilienthal one.⁹⁸ To Baruch and his allies, meanwhile, only feckless US statecraft would forego the security advantage inherent in atomic monopoly, no matter how fleeting; at a minimum, the United States should not jeopardise its head start on weapons research or nuclear findings, such as those obtained at Bikini in July by the test explosions (done days and to much controversy after Gromyko first addressed the AEC).⁹⁹ By late 1946, both parties perceived that the atomic arms race had its own ineluctability, unimpeded by UN negotiations, soon lost anyway in the miasma of propaganda war.¹⁰⁰

Each side in time accused the other of acting in bad faith. Dripping in sanctimony, both scrambled for the moral high ground. They exchanged platitudes about the desirability of global understanding. Marxist jargon collided with US narcissism. Clichés about democracy and the human future were solemnly intoned. The Soviets charged the Americans with coy subterfuges to propagate their atomic hegemony and impose capitalist enslavement over all peoples. The Americans rejoined that the logic of Moscow policy was to

subvert world peace.¹⁰¹ Heedless of Primo Levi's admonition — 'stop and consider' - the two sides achieved rhetorical parity, nothing more.

Conclusions

The question of how to mend destruction-past and avert destruction-future focused thoughtful minds, US and other, as they pondered this paradox: the force necessary to defeat Axis monstrosity also begat another evil. The dilemma, to France's Léon Blum, was that Hitler's Germany had created a situation which obliged otherwise undepraved people to behave ferociously. Although he lived to see Nazi power beaten, Blum sensed that Berlin's method and idolatry of military-might would remain supreme. 'You [Nazis],' he said during the war, 'are already conquerors in this sense: you have breathed such terror all about that to master you, to prevent the return of your fury, we shall have no other way of fashioning the world save in your image, your laws, the law of Force.'¹⁰² In an unselfconscious echo of Blum, Oppenheimer in early 1947 vented this anguish about what was done to Hiroshima and Nagasaki: 'The only justification for our action is our complete acceptance of the Nazi philosophy which we were fighting against, and which asserts that anything, no matter how brutal, and whether directed against non-combatants or not, is justified if it helps to win a war.'¹⁰³ Even earlier, contemplating Vishnu's words in the *Bhagavad-Gita*, Oppenheimer already knew that Second World War-past and atomic bomb-future were cast in the same infernal moment: 'Now, I am become Death, the destroyer of worlds.'¹⁰⁴

However unexpected, a 'sublime irony' - Churchill's phrase - did subsequently rule. The prospect of mutually assured destruction in the cold-war years encouraged the exercise of restraint by Washington and Moscow. The deterrent power of nuclear weapons can be credited, at least in part, with having averted a third world war. 'Safety,' Churchill again, became 'the sturdy child of terror, and survival the twin brother of annihilation.'¹⁰⁵

Needless to elaborate, the willingness and preparation to kill millions of people in an instant - inherent in US and Soviet strategic doctrines - constituted not only a deviation from the spirit that animated the Acheson-Lilienthal proposal but also moral collapse. Under the trailing shadow of nuclear war, cold-war populations lived apprehensively for decades. William Faulkner captured that mood, when, in his 1950 Nobel Prize acceptance speech, he asked: 'When will I be blown up?'¹⁰⁶ Moments of nuclear swagger were disconcerting, as when in 1953 President Eisenhower implied atomic usage to hasten a Korean armistice or threatened similarly to break the impasses during the 1955 and 1958 contests centred on the offshore islands (Jinmen, Mazu). In the 1956 Suez Canal war, Nikita Khrushchev warned of the lethality of Soviet nuclear-tipped missiles should they rain upon London, Paris, or Israel.¹⁰⁷ Faulkner's question resounded during the Cuban Missile events of October 1962.

After Cuba, the Soviets and Americans took affirmative, albeit tentative steps: emplacing safeguards to prevent war by accident or miscalculation; monitoring the environmental-health hazards associated with thermonuclear tests; checking the spread of doomsday weapons; capping the size of arsenals. Admittedly, none of the ratified instruments - White House-Kremlin 'hotline', limited test ban, SALT or START treaties, nuclear non-proliferation regimes - ended the cold war, in which case they had kinship with the Acheson-Lilienthal initiative. It had not fenced nuclear science within UN quarantine or forestalled the cold

war. The latter purpose, of course, was not part of the Acheson-Lilienthal aim; to assert otherwise would invite a category mistake. The atomic question, contributory though it was, neither explained the origins of the cold war nor its duration. For such explanation, one must probe the geopolitical reconfiguration caused by the Second World War, intensified by East–West ideological competition.

The nuclear problem preceded the cold war, US possession of the bomb in 1945 being a function of the atomic race against Nazi Germany. Correspondingly, nuclear dangers have lingered past the fall of the Berlin Wall and implosion of the USSR. That the collapse of the cold war order did not inaugurate abandonment of nuclear arms is underscored in the numbers below (Table 2), measuring the increase of danger first addressed by the Acheson-Lilienthal authors, when the world possessed only a handful.

Table 2. Nuclear warheads in 2015

Country	Total
United States	4,764
Russia	4,300
China	250
France	300
United Kingdom	225
Pakistan	120
India	110
Israel	80
North Korea	10

Source: 'Arsenals and Aspirations', *The Economist*, 7–13 March 2015, 25.

Plainly, as an experiment in multistate co-operation, UNRRA could claim more success than the 1946 attempt, blending quixotic with exigent, to corral atomic science. Unconnected either to the revitalisation of post-war Germany or Japan - supplanted in popular memory by ERP, that most creative cold-war project knitting Western economies to the burgeoning United States - UNRRA nevertheless functioned worthily. Like Henry Wallace, Lehman and La Guardia resisted the pull of anti-Soviet mentality and defended UNRRA against faultfinders. 'Let us stop talking cynically about the next war and think sincerely about future peace,' La Guardia urged. He lamented that UNRRA, like Wallace (expelled from Truman's cabinet in September 1946), became a cold-war casualty.¹⁰⁸

Born of wartime aspiration, tinged with something of the expectancy that attached to Acheson-Lilienthal thinking, UNRRA presupposed a continuing of Allied co-operation that, in the event, ceased. Still, retrospectively viewed, UNRRA as internationalised relief work suggested that an alternative to cold war once existed, if fleetingly. Further, before UNRRA folded ('assassinated' in the judgement of Ira Hirschmann), it compiled a record demonstrating that hardship can be ameliorated in distressed places via multilateral collaboration, an achievement worth pondering in the twenty-first century, when problems of global distributive justice and displaced persons have attained fresh urgency.¹⁰⁹ Significant, too, UNRRA's legacy encompassed more than a tantalising outline of that path not taken to exit from cold-war irreversibility. Numerous UNRRA veterans and property were eventually transferred to institutions that assumed honourable parts in mitigating misery. In crucial ways, UNRRA inspired, if not actually spawned, the Food and Agriculture Organization, International Refugee Organization (later renamed United Nations High

Commissioner for Refugees), World Health Organization, and the Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF).¹¹⁰

In the final analysis, the Second World War not only placed patches of earth and nations in extremis. The war also injected - beyond retrieval - into history new categories of crime, such that people would thenceforth only feel shame that fellow human beings in a cascade of ethical capitulation had done the things.¹¹¹ Neither conscience nor memory could be unstained, not after the applications of perverted science traced in emptied Zyklon-B canisters or mushroom clouds or any of the other ineradicable evidences. Only faith would allow for anything so fanciful as a better future.¹¹² However distinctive in their ways, UNRRA as succour and Acheson-Lilienthal as plausibility were indissolubly linked: they testified to faith's irrepressibility against irrefutable experience and dismal odds.

Notes

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3. Y. Khan, 'Wars of Displacement: Exile and Uprooting in the 1940s' in Geyer and Tooze, *The Cambridge History of the Second World War*, iii. 277–8.
4. C. Milosz, 'Preparation', *New York Review of Books*, 26 Sep. 1985.
5. S. de Werth Neu, *A Long Silence: Memories of a German Refugee Child, 1941–1958* (Amherst, NY, 2011), 15.
6. Hata Tsuneo, *Atomic Bomb and a Soldier: A Diary of the Chronicle of the Emperor Hirohito* (private printing in author's possession, n.d., translated from the Japanese by Lisa Shinohara), 178; email to author from Hata Gohei, 2 Jan. 2015.
7. P. Levi, 'The Child-Girl of Pompeii' in *Collected Poems* (London, 1988), 34.
8. G. Fox, 'The Origins of UNRRA', *Political Science Quarterly*, Dec. 1950, 566–7, Vol. 65, No. 4 (December 1950).
9. Herbert Hoover to Lehman, 25 Nov. 1942; Hoover to Cordell Hull, 24 April 1941; Hull to Hoover, 10 May 1941; Hoover to Hull, 3 June 1941; Hull to Hoover 28 June 1941, Box 157, [New York, Columbia University,] Herbert Lehman Papers; A. Nevins, *Herbert H. Lehman and His Era* (New York, 1963), 222, 225.
10. J. Reinisch, 'Internationalism in Relief: The Birth (and Death) of UNRRA' in M. Mazower et al. (eds), *Post-War Reconstruction in Europe: International Perspectives, 1945–1949* (Oxford, 2011), 263.
11. W. Churchill, *Never Give In! The Best of Winston Churchill's Speeches* (New York, 2003), 'The Few', 20 Aug. 1940, 240–1; M. Kinnear, *Woman of the World: Mary McGeachy and International Cooperation* (Toronto, 2004), 105.
12. Lehman to FDR, 30 Aug. 1943, Box 157, Herbert Lehman Papers; D. Plesch, *America, Hitler and the UN: How the Allies Won World War II and Forged a Peace* (London, 2011), 122; Nevins, *Herbert H. Lehman and His Era*, 227–8; Fox, 'The Origins of UNRRA', 565.
13. A. Williams, 'Reconstruction Before the Marshall Plan', *Review of International Studies* (July 2005), 551; D. Acheson, *Present at the Creation* (New York, 1969), 68–71.
14. W. Hitchcock, *The Bitter Road to Freedom: The Human Cost of Allied Victory in World War II Europe* (New York, 2008), 219.
15. Fox, 'The Origins of UNRRA', 584.
16. Acheson's proposals regarding UNRRA's financing of relief operations sprang from his close consultations with Harry Dexter White of the Treasury Department - as well as with Britain's John Maynard Keynes and Richard Law (later Lord Coleraine), and Herbert Lehman. Thanks

- here to an anonymous *International History Review* referee. Also see Acheson, *Present at the Creation*, 77.
17. Plesch, *America, Hitler and the UN: How the Allies Won World War II and Forged a Peace*, 125; Hitchcock, *The Bitter Road to Freedom: The Human Cost of Allied Victory in World War II Europe*, 220.
 18. Lehman, Oral History, 747 [New York, Columbia University].
 19. Reinisch, 'Internationalism in Relief: The Birth (and Death) of UNRRA', 271–2; S. Porter, 'Humanitarian Politics and Governance: International Responses to the Civilian Toll in the Second World War' in Geyer and Tooze, *The Cambridge History of the Second World War*, iii. 516–17.
 20. Herbert Lehman, Oral History, 758, Columbia University.
 21. Dwight Eisenhower to Lehman, 15 Nov. 1945, Box 149, Herbert Lehman Papers and Herbert Lehman Oral History, 738.
 22. B. Shephard, *The Long Road Home: The Aftermath of the Second World War* (New York, 2011), 52; Reinisch, 'Internationalism in Relief: the Birth (and Death) of UNRRA', 282–3; Fox, 'The Origins of UNRRA', 571, 578–9; Plesch, *America, Hitler and the UN: How the Allies Won World War II and Forged a Peace*, 122.
 23. Woodbridge, *UNRRA: The History of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration*, ii. 541.
 24. Hitchcock, *The Bitter Road to Freedom: The Human Cost of Allied Victory in World War II Europe*, 222; Shephard, *The Long Road Home: The Aftermath of the Second World War*, 311.
 25. Lehman to Ernest Bevin, regarding Jackson: 'There was no part of the world to which he was not willing to go and no work seemed too much for him.' 11 Dec. 1947, Box 141, Herbert Lehman Papers.
 26. Shephard, *The Long Road Home: The Aftermath of the Second World War*, 310–11. On McGeachy, see section two of S. Armstrong-Reid and D. Murray, *Armies of Peace: Canada and the UNRRA Years* (Toronto, 2008) and Kinnear, *Woman of the World: Mary McGeachy and International Cooperation*, 148.
 27. Fox, 'The Origins of UNRRA', 561.
 28. Woodbridge, *UNRRA: The History of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration*, ii. 551–2. President Truman labelled UNRRA, in November 1945, 'the greatest and most difficult humanitarian effort ever undertaken'. Truman to Lehman, 8 Nov. 1945, Box 182, Herbert Lehman Papers.
 29. H. H. Kung to Lehman, 7 March 1946; Lehman to Kung, 3 April 1946, Box 161, Herbert Lehman Papers.
 30. Woodbridge, *UNRRA: The History of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration*, ii. 451–2.
 31. *Ibid.*, 453.
 32. Lehman to Dean Acheson, 14 Jan. 1950, Box 137, Herbert Lehman Papers.
 33. Carlos Romulo Speech, 10 Nov. 1958, Box 175, Herbert Lehman Papers.
 34. Woodbridge, *UNRRA: The History of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration*, ii. 454–65.
 35. I. A. Hirschmann, *The Embers Still Burn* (New York, 1949), 185.
 36. Woodbridge, *UNRRA: The History of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration*, ii. 229–30.
 37. T. Snyder, *Bloodlands: Europe Between Hitler and Stalin* (New York, 2010), 162–3, 168.
 38. Woodbridge, *UNRRA: The History of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration*, ii. 256.
 39. *Ibid.*, 188.
 40. Czech tribute to Lehman, 7 Jan. 1947, Box 140, Herbert Lehman Papers; Woodbridge, *UNRRA: The History of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration*, ii. 199.
 41. T. Judt, *Postwar: A History of Europe Since 1945* (New York, 2006), 52; Woodbridge, *UNRRA: The History of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration*, ii. 320, #122.
 42. James Byrnes to Lehman, 22 March 1946, Box 143, Herbert Lehman Papers; Hitchcock, *The Bitter Road to Freedom: The Human Cost of Allied Victory in World War II Europe*, 227–33, 239–43.

43. Woodbridge, *UNRRA: The History of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration*, ii. 294. Also see Hitchcock, *The Bitter Road to Freedom: The Human Cost of Allied Victory in World War II Europe*, 233–9.
44. Herbert Lehman, Oral History, 759.
45. Kinnear, *Woman of the World: Mary McGeachy and International Cooperation*, 162.
46. K. Lowe, *Savage Continent: Europe in the Aftermath of World War II* (New York, 2012), 27. One displaced American was La Guardia's sister, Gemma. She had survived internment at Ravensbrück. Afterward she experienced the vicissitudes of life in a DP centre, but won passage back to the United States in May 1947. See H. P. Jeffers, *The Napoleon of New York: Mayor Fiorello La Guardia* (New York, 2002), 372–3; T. Kessner, *Fiorello H. La Guardia and the Making of Modern New York* (New York, 1989), 562–4.
47. Shephard, *The Long Road Home: The Aftermath of the Second World War*, 305–27; Plesch, *America, Hitler and the UN: How the Allies Won World War II and Forged a Peace*, 137.
48. D. Mayers, *FDR's Ambassadors and the Diplomacy of Crisis* (Cambridge, 2013), 240–1.
49. Lowe, *Savage Continent: Europe in the Aftermath of World War II*, 94.
50. Nevins, *Herbert H. Lehman and His Era*, 286. Philip Noel-Baker, Labour MP, said in 1960: 'Without UNRRA, Europe would have gone to complete disaster in 1945–46.' Quoted from his letter to Mrs. Lehman, 15 Feb. 1960, Box 171, Herbert Lehman Papers.
51. Porter, 'Humanitarian Politics and Governance: International Responses to the Civilian Toll in the Second World War', 519–20.
52. Herbert Lehman, Oral History, 736.
53. Shephard, *The Long Road Home: The Aftermath of the Second World War*, 57; R. Ingalls, *Herbert H. Lehman and New York's Little New Deal* (New York, 1975), 2, 17–18; Herbert Lehman, Oral History, 748.
54. Woodbridge, *UNRRA: The History of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration*, ii. 543–4. Lehman once confessed: 'The first group of people we recruited, in some of the foreign countries, did not measure up to the job, and we had to get rid of them.' Herbert Lehman, Oral History, 737.
55. Hitchcock, *The Bitter Road to Freedom: The Human Cost of Allied Victory in World War II Europe*, 218–19, 223; Lowe, *Savage Continent: Europe in the Aftermath of World War II*, 108; Nevins, *Herbert H. Lehman and His Era*, 226; Porter, 'Humanitarian Politics and Governance: International Responses to the Civilian Toll in the Second World War', 518.
56. Personal Diary Sep. 1945–Aug. 1946, Entries 6 April 1946 and 25 August 1946, [Imperial War Museum, London,] Lieutenant General Sir Frederick Morgan Papers.
57. *Ibid.*, Entry 1 Aug. 1946.
58. *Ibid.*, Entries 23 March 1946 and 1 Aug. 1946; Morgan to Under Secretary of State, 14 Sep. 1946 and Morgan to Major General G.W.R. Templer, 4 July 1946, Folders containing papers related to UNRRA, 6/1, Lieutenant General Sir Frederick Morgan Papers.
59. Hirschmann, *The Embers Still Burn*, 10–11, 144; Shephard, *The Long Road Home: The Aftermath of the Second World War*, 241; Lieutenant General Sir Frederick Morgan, *Peace and War: A Soldier's Life* (London, 1961), 218–62; I. Hirschmann, *Caution to the Winds* (New York, 1962), 204–6.
60. Morgan to Major General E.D. Fanshawe, 1 April 1947, Folders containing papers related to UNRRA, 6/3, Lieutenant General Sir Frederick Morgan Papers.
61. Lehman to Stewart Alsop, 14 May 1958, Box 137, Herbert Lehman Papers.
62. Nevins, *Herbert H. Lehman and His Era*, 275, 277–8.
63. Shephard, *The Long Road Home: The Aftermath of the Second World War*, 155–7; Hebert Lehman, Oral History, 738, 761, 763.
64. Thomas Reynolds to Lehman, 20 Feb. 1943, Box 157, Herbert Lehman Papers; R. N. Smith, *An Uncommon Man: the Triumph of Herbert Hoover* (New York, 1984), 319–20; G. D. Best, *Herbert Hoover: The Postpresidential Years 1933–1964* (Stanford, 1983), i. 218, 268–9.
65. J. Hoff Wilson, *Herbert Hoover: Forgotten Progressive* (Boston, 1975), 256; W. Leuchtenburg, *Herbert Hoover* (New York, 2009), 157.
66. Best, *Herbert Hoover: The Postpresidential Years 1933–1964*, ii. 288–90.

67. Hirschmann, *The Embers Still Burn*, 147.
68. Shephard, *The Long Road Home: The Aftermath of the Second World War*, 260.
69. Best, *Herbert Hoover: The Postpresidential Years 1933–1964*, ii. 295.
70. Speech to UNRRA Council Meeting, 6 Aug. 1946 and The European Crisis, 31 May 1947, Box 60 [Independence, MO, Harry S. Truman Presidential Library,] William Clayton Papers; Acheson, *Present at the Creation*, 231.
71. Acheson to Bernard Baruch, 18 April 1950, Box 29, Dean Acheson Papers, [Independence, MO,] Harry S. Truman Presidential Library; Acheson, *Present at the Creation*, 201; R. Beisner, *Dean Acheson: A Life in the Cold War* (New York, 2006), 46.
72. W. Hitchcock, 'The Marshall Plan and the Creation of the West' in M. Leffler and O. A. Westad (eds), *The Cambridge History of The Cold War* (Cambridge, 2011), i. 154.
73. Truman had hesitated before authorising two atomic tests at Bikini. Truman to Carl Hatch, 6 July 1946, Box 1, Atomic Bomb Collection, [Independence, MO,] Harry S. Truman Presidential Library.
74. D. Holloway, 'Nuclear Weapons and the Escalation of the Cold War, 1945–1962' in Leffler and Westad, *The Cambridge History of the Cold War*, i. 376–7; J. Chace, *Acheson: The Secretary of State Who Created the American World* (New York, 1998), 128.
75. A. Sakharov, *Memoirs* (New York, 1990), 164.
76. Petition by scientists of the Metallurgical Laboratory of University of Chicago, 17 July 1945. Also notable, of course, was O.C. Brewster, an engineer with the Kellogg Corporation and involved with the Manhattan Project since February 1942. He wrote to Truman before the atomic bomb was a reality: 'This thing [atomic bomb] must not be permitted on this earth. We must not be the most hated and feared people on earth however good our intent may be.' Brewster to Truman, 24 May 1945, Box 2, Atomic Bomb Collection, Harry S. Truman Presidential Library.
77. S. Rice and J. Jortner, *James Franck 1882–1964* (Washington, 2010), 16.
78. M. Sherwin, *A World Destroyed: The Atomic Bomb and the Grand Alliance* (New York, 1977), 210–19.
79. H. Stimson and McG. Bundy, *On Active Service in Peace and War* (New York, 1948), 645.
80. *Ibid.*, 644.
81. Acheson did not doubt the need to use two atomic bombs against Japan in August 1945 and endorsed Stimson's public defence of those actions. Acheson to Henry Stimson, 23 Jan. 1947, Reel 19, Dean Acheson Papers, [New Haven, CT,] Yale University.
82. Beisner, *Dean Acheson: A Life in the Cold War*, 45. In summer 1949, with the cold war fully under way but before the Soviets tested their first atomic weapon, Acheson still felt that the matter of atomic energy should be resolved. Acheson to Louis Johnson, 22 July 1949, Box 32, Dean Acheson Papers, Harry S. Truman Presidential Library.
83. Oppenheimer was esteemed by Lilienthal and colleagues. Of Oppenheimer, Lilienthal once testified: 'He is worth living a life-time just to know that mankind has been able to produce such a being - even if we may have to wait another 100 years for the second one off the line.' David Lilienthal to 'Dear Herb,' 14 Jan. 1948, Box 46, [Washington D.C., Library of Congress,] J. Robert Oppenheimer Papers.
84. P. Goodchild, *J. Robert Oppenheimer: Shatterer of Worlds* (Boston, 1981), 180. On Truman, see: J. Blum (ed), *The Price of Vision: The Diary of Henry A. Wallace 1942–1946* (Boston, 1973), entry of 10 Aug. 1945; M. Jones, *After Hiroshima: The United States, Race and Nuclear Weapons in Asia, 1945–1965* (Cambridge, 2010), 26–7.
85. Oppenheimer to David Lilienthal, From a Note, 2 Feb. 1946, Box 262, J. Robert Oppenheimer Papers; J. Robert Oppenheimer to Lilienthal, 24 May 1946, Box 116, [Princeton, N.J.,] Princeton University, David Lilienthal Papers; G. Herken, *Brotherhood of the Bomb: The Tangled Lives and Loyalties of Robert Oppenheimer, Ernest Lawrence, and Edward Teller* (New York, 2002), 163; Acheson, *Present at the Creation*, 153; S. Neuse, *David E. Lilienthal: The Journey of an American Liberal* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1996), p. 170.
86. State Department, *A Report on the International Control of Atomic Energy* (Washington, 1946), 9–10.
87. *Ibid.*, 26, 29, 31–2.

88. *Ibid.*, xiii. To Walter Lippmann, Chester Bernard wrote: 'The alternative,' to international control, 'is to try to keep ahead of the rest of the world in an atomic armament race, the end of which would be catastrophic quite beyond the imagination of most people, if not of everybody.' Bernard to Lippmann, 20 June 1946, Box 114, David Lilienthal Papers. Similar sentiments larded the Acheson-Vannever Bush interview with Larry Lesueur of CBS on 23 April 1946, Box 134 Dean Acheson Papers, Harry S. Truman Library. Also see D. Holloway, *Stalin and the Bomb: The Soviet Union and Atomic Energy 1939–1956* (New Haven, 1994), 161; Herken, *Brotherhood of the Bomb: The Tangled Lives and Loyalties of Robert Oppenheimer, Ernest Lawrence, and Edward Teller*, 163–4; Chace, *Acheson: The Secretary of State Who Created the American World*, 126.
89. *A Report on the International Control of Atomic Energy*, 61. Also see F. Bartel, 'Surviving the Years of Grace: The Atomic Bomb and the Specter of World Government, 1945–1950', *Diplomatic History* (April 2015), 288–93.
90. D. Lilienthal, *The Journals: The Atomic Energy Years 1945–1950* (New York, 1964), 35; S. Butler, *Roosevelt and Stalin: Portrait of a Partnership* (New York, 2015), 318–19.
91. M. Coit, *Mr. Baruch* (Boston, 1957), 567; Beisner, *Dean Acheson: A Life in the Cold War*, 34.
92. J. Schwarz, *The Speculator: Bernard M. Baruch in Washington, 1917–1965* (Chapel Hill, 1981), 494; Lilienthal, *The Journals: The Atomic Energy Years*, 69–70.
93. Baruch recruited to his 'team' these men: Herbert Swope, Ferdinand Eberstadt, John Hancock, Fred Searls.
94. For Wallace, see Blum's *The Price of Vision: The Diary of Henry A. Wallace 1942–1946*, entry of 23 July 1946.
95. Baruch remained adamant on the subject of condign punishment - possibly to the point of war if necessary - for atomic violators. See, for example, Baruch to Lilienthal, 27 May 1946, Box 114, David Lilienthal Papers; Baruch to Robert Patterson, 1 July 1946, Box 31, Baruch to Lilienthal, 28 April 1947, Box 444, Baruch to John Foster Dulles, 5 Oct. 1948, Box 443, Baruch to James Conant, 24 Dec. 1946, Box 439, Memo of Baruch Meeting with Harry Truman and James Byrnes, 7 June 1946, Box 31, [Princeton, N.J.,] Princeton University, Bernard Baruch Papers; Baruch to Oppenheimer, 15 Jan. 1947, Box 19, J. Robert Oppenheimer Papers.
96. *The Baruch Plan*, 14 June 1946, p. 4, www.atomicarchive.com/Docs/Deterrence/BaruchPlan.shtml
97. Holloway, *Stalin and the Bomb*, 162.
98. *Ibid.*, 162, 164, 166; Beisner, *Dean Acheson: A Life in the Cold War*, 35.
99. Oppenheimer objected to the Bikini tests for reasons technical and moral-political. Of the latter and in advance of the explosions, he voiced doubt - as did the American Federation of Scientists - about 'the appropriateness of a purely military test of atomic weapons, at a time when our plans for effectively eliminating them from national armaments are in their earliest beginnings'. Oppenheimer to Harry Truman, 3 May 1946, Box 373, J. Robert Oppenheimer Papers. The Soviet newspaper, *Pravda* (3 July 1946), excoriated the Bikini explosions as proof of US perfidy and Washington's desire to perfect atomic weapons of mass destruction for purposes of 'blackmail'.
100. Schwarz, *The Speculator: Bernard M. Baruch in Washington, 1917–1965*, 506.
101. Andrei Vishinsky speech, 10 Nov. 1949, Box 74, J. Robert Oppenheimer Papers; Memcon: Bernard Baruch, Philip Jessup, Acheson, 24 Sep. 1950, Box 29, Dean Acheson Papers, Harry S. Truman Presidential Library.
102. J. Colton, *Léon Blum: Humanist in Politics* (New York, 1966), e-book.
103. Oppenheimer to James Conant, 7 March 1947, Box 27, J. Robert Oppenheimer Papers.
104. www.atomicarchive.com/Movies/Movie8.shtml
105. Churchill, *Never Given In! The Best of Winston Churchill's Speeches*, 'Never Despair', 1 March 1955, 496.
106. W. Faulkner, 'Speech on Acceptance of the Nobel Prize', Nov. 1950, D. Boorstin (ed), *An American Primer* (Chicago, 1966), 899.
107. S. Talbot (ed), *Khrushchev Remembers* (Boston, 1970), 435; Holloway, 'Nuclear Weapons and the Escalation of the Cold War, 1945–1962', 391–2.

108. Kessner, *Fiorello H. La Guardia and the Making of Modern New York*, 584, 585. La Guardia to Lehman, 18 April 1947, Box 161, Herbert Lehman Papers.
109. Hirschmann, *The Embers Still Burn*, xiii. Lehman asserted: 'We liquidated [UNRRA]... at least a year and probably two years before we should have.' Cited in Herbert Lehman, Oral History, 760.
110. Reinisch, 'Internationalism in Relief: The Birth (and Death) of UNRRA', 285.
111. I have here borrowed from the language and imagery of Primo Levi. See his *The Reawakening* (New York, 1995), 16–17.
112. Edwin Gault to Acheson, 7 Dec. 1950, Box 29, Dean Acheson Papers, Harry S. Truman Presidential Library.